

Granny's Oatmeal Cake [Lynn Metheny]



I grew up on a farm in WV 100 yards away from my paternal grandparents. Granny and Pappy were the rock on which my whole childhood was built. Granny taught me to cook, clean, play dominoes, do math in my head (while playing dominoes,) and that in all things, "Make a joyful noise".

One of our family's favorite cakes was THE oatmeal cake. I loved to make it with her and even loved more eating it. At my wedding shower, people brought recipes for the new bride-to-be. Granny gave me a hand written copy of the oatmeal cake recipe. She was officially passing the torch to me. Since I was now an "adult" I started a new tradition of making myself an oatmeal cake on my birthday and eating it for breakfast, lunch and dinner. With every bite, I rationed the nutritional value of the oatmeal, eggs, flour and even a touch of milk. I often stood side-by-side with my own daughter mixing and measuring and creating the family cake.

The week after my grandmother's funeral several years later, I made an oatmeal cake every day with her handwritten recipe as my map. This time, I mixed in a new ingredient: my tears. Finally, after seven straight days of cakes, I felt better, and more at peace. This cake, however, has come to symbolize all that is family and love. Ironically, I made one today to send to my daughter who is working out of state all summer, so she can feel the family love.

1 Cup quick oats ♥ 1 1/4 boiling hot water ♥ 1/2 cup butter
1 cup white sugar ♥ 1 cup brown sugar ♥ 1 tsp vanilla ♥ 2 eggs
1 1/3 cups flour ♥ 1 tsp cinnamon ♥ 1/2 tsp nutmeg ♥ 1/2 tsp salt

Pour water over oats - let stand 20 minutes. Add butter and sugar. Mix well and eggs and vanilla. Sift dry ingredients and add to mixture. Bake 350 in rectangle pan 30 minutes

Oatmeal Cake Topping

1 cup coconut ♥ 2/3 cup brown sugar ♥ 4 tbsp butter ♥ 1/4 cup milk
1/2 tsp vanilla ♥ 1/2 cup nuts (optional)

Mix topping and spread on cake directly taken from the oven. Put under the broiler or in oven until topping in bubbly.

Grandma's Biscuits [Jaqueta Owen]

When I was a young child, my family would travel to visit my grandmother on her farm in West Virginia. She delighted in cooking huge pots of mashed potatoes, mounds of crispy fried chicken, fresh garden green beans, and, my favorite, biscuits. These biscuits had a flakey top and soft, mouth-watering innards just begging for hand-churned butter and her own grape jelly. As I grew older and began helping in the kitchen, I decide to try my hand at biscuit making. Armed with pencil and pad, I ran to the kitchen on our next visit ready to scribble down the secret ingredients. She laughed with her hands on her hips and told me all her secrets. "Why," she said, reaching into the flour bin, "*you just throw in a little this and a little that. T'aint nothing to it.*" I was hardly prepared for the imprecise measurements and went away saddened that I could not duplicate her magic.

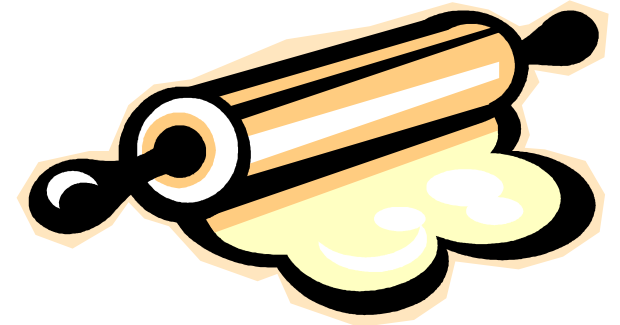
Apparently, I was not the only one to try making her biscuits. My mom tells me her few attempts were not so spectacular. My dad even suggested he use them as ammunition.

Grandma died when I was a teenager and I spend many years trying to replicate these yummy delicacies. I suspect she used lard for shortening, since she could get it right from her farm, and sour milk or buttermilk for the milk (refrigeration has come a long way since the 50's). Here is my adapted attempt for Grandma's Biscuits.

2 cups flour
4 T shortening
4 t baking powder
3/4 C milk
1 t salt

Mix the dry ingredietnts, then work in the shortening with a fork. Add the milk and stir until it all sticks together. Knead on a floured board, folding dough over about four times. Pat out and roll to about 1/2 inch thickness. Cut with a large mouth water glass, place on pan and bake at 450 degrees for 12-15 minutes.

Grandma would have been proud of you.



Donna's Mushrooms [Donna Killingham]

One day, while sitting in the church office waiting for the secretary to finish her phone call with the plumber, I couldn't help but visually sift through all the papers stacked in piles on the desk. Helter skelter in all directions, the corners of papers in the colors of an office supplier's dream angled left, right, left, right, draping out of folders and folding into bulletins.

Suddenly, as if a guiding light led me, ****gasp!****, Donna's Mushrooms! My steely eyeballs narrowed into tightly focused slits....it was the recipe for the mushrooms everyone raves about at the church dinners! In full view...in front of my very own eyeballs! The little PostIt note plainly read *Donna's Mushrooms* along the edge, but the rest of the square was caught under the little bobblehead statue of a nun holding a sign that said Sin Tax—One Quarter, so that the rest of the information was hidden. Drat!! (Opps, a quarter to the Sin Tax statue box!) Does the secretary know it's there? Oh, Double Darn, she's hanging up! (Darn, another quarter! Oh Criminy, that's ANOTHER quarter!)

As casually as possible I say, 'So tell me, do you know anyone who might know Donna's recipe for the mushrooms?' The secretary responded, 'Well sure, it's right under the Sin Tax statue that's how we get all those quarters for the flower fund!' Darn!! (*sigh*, another quarter)

A box of fairly large mushrooms

Stouffer's Spinach Souffle, thawed

Pop the stems out of the mushrooms so you have mushroom bowls made from the caps. Spoon some Stouffer's Spinach Souffle into the bowls. Bake at 400° for about 12 minutes or until the tops turn golden brown. Eat.



Making Peace the Easy Way [Byanne Bringor]

One year, my study hall banded together to produce a monthly newsletter, *The 6th Grade Survival Guide*. Every couple of weeks they would put together all sorts of word games, puzzles, and seasonal oddities to fill a two-sided flyer. In mid-winter, all was a flutter because submissions had dwindled and panic was starting to ensue among the editors. To make peace among the ranks, I submitted this little ditty along with samples, something I whip up when I need to make peace with someone. A big plate of Peace-Making Chocolate is hard to resist, but cook it in solitude so everyone thinks you're bustin' your chops to make them happy!

Bag of semi-sweet chocolate chips

raisins or Cransins or nuts (stuff the folks you need to make peace with likes)

Nonstick skillet or saucepan

Cookie sheet

Warm up, not heat up, the chips in a nonstick pan until you have a puddle of chocolate. Speed and too much heat will kill this, let the chips melt slowly. Mix in a handful or two of the peace-making stuff. Spread onto a cookie sheet and chill. After it has cooled and hardened, break it into pieces and make peace.

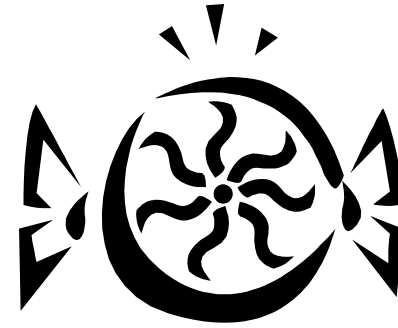
Spittoo-ees [Angela Mohr]

My whole family knows my brother to be the best hushpuppy maker of all time and therefore valuable to all get-togethers...he's also a bit cagey when it comes to sharing information. He insists the hushpuppies are done simply, with a smattering of sealed lips for flavor at which point he puckers up and puts his finger to his lips as if he's saying "*SsHhhhhh...*"

When my son was very young, he was enjoying the gentle teasing conversation between my brothers and sister about the remarkable hushpuppies. Joey comes running to me and says he knows the secret! Uncle Rick spits on the hushpuppies! Then he put his finger to his lips and spit on it to demonstrate the technique. Since then the family has renamed the Rick Mohr Premier Puppy recipe to Spittoo-ees.

2 handfuls of rough cornmeal
2 handfuls of flour
an egg
one chopped onion
chopped parsely
fat pinch of salt
fat pinch of paprika
really fat pinch of baking powder
buttermilk to make a *thick*, but sticky batter

Put frying oil and a dab of bacon grease into a saucepan (enough so a spoonful of batter sinks below the surface and rises to the top again). Heat oil until heat ripples can be seen through it in the pan. Drop spoonfuls of batter into the hot oil, only doing three or four at a time. When the frenzy of spattering dies down, turn them over briefly before taking them out and draining on a brown paper bag. Eat hot while drinking an ice cold sprite with cherries in the glass.



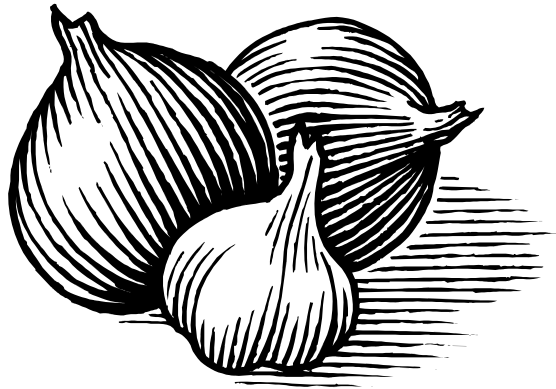
Peppermint Ice Cream Cake [Shellie Dunlap]

Ok, this recipe is our family cake. We've made it since I was like ten years old. This is how it goes, I stir, my mom puts it in the pan and places it in the freezer, and my grandma takes it out and serves it. Also, I always get the first piece!

1 container Breyers All Natural Vanilla Ice Cream, divided
1 cup Hot fudge topping or dark chocolate with mint (room temperature)
2 cups Thawed frozen whipped topping or whipped cream
1 Red ribbon-shaped, fruit-flavored snack
Green and/or red striped hard peppermint or spearmint candies

1. Line 9"x 5"x 3" loaf pan with plastic wrap leaving 5" wrap overhang on each side
2. Into prepared pan, scoop 1/2 of the Breyers All Natural Vanilla Ice Cream, pressing to form an even layer. Pour in room temperature hot fudge topping. Scoop in remaining ice cream, pressing to form an even layer; cover with overhanging plastic wrap. Freeze 4 hours or overnight. Freeze serving platter 30 minutes before serving.
3. Lift ice cream from pan using plastic wrap and invert onto chilled serving platter; remove plastic wrap. Frost with whipped topping. Decorate with fruit-flavored snack for "ribbon" and candies. If needed, return to freezer 30 minutes to firm up decorations.

And that's our family recipe! Someday, I'll let you try it! The End!



Onion Dip [Sabrine Godsley]

True story: Kimberly had been cutting for an hour or more as she tried one thing and then another. Her swollen, tearful eyes stinging with the pain of onion fumes captured between her eyeglasses and eyeballs. She remembered the pieces being especially small, and kind of narrow. And then there were the spices, or were they herbs? Oh, who knew?! Her frustration level was growing more pronounced as the tears rolled down her cheeks in larger numbers. Surely she could make this dip thing work...she wanted to have something to contribute to the party and had already volunteered her family's secret onion dip. OH!! In a crazed stroke of genius she remembered who could help her, MOM!! Surely she'd share the recipe, why hadn't she thought of her before? **She** knew the family secret and Kimberly knew how to keep a secret!! She called home. 'Why certainly honey, let me get the box.' *Box?*

1 envelope Lipton Onion Soup Mix

1 container sour cream

Mix together and let sit in refrigerator overnight. Use with chips.

Like any good buddy would do, I embroidered Kimberly a handtowel with the recipe so she wouldn't forget.

Happy Cake [Kaitlin Duley]

When I was born, I was allergic to eggs. The first few birthday cakes I got were eggless, which pretty much ruined the dessert. On my fourth birthday, my grandma gave my mom a recipe for a certain cake that was made without eggs. With the first bite I took I knew that this cake was the best I'd ever had - so I called it, *Happy Cake!* It's really called *Eclair Cake*, but doesn't "happy cake" sound better? I'm over the egg allergy now, and I'm glad that I can eat regular cake, but by far "happy cake" definitely makes me the happiest.

1 box of honey graham crackers

3 cups milk

8 oz. cool whip

2 small boxes of French vanilla instant pudding

Mix milk with pudding and then fold in cool whip. Put a layer of graham crackers down inside a 9x3 pan. On top of that goes the pudding layer, and then another layer of graham crackers. Do that again, and you should have the Happy Cake.

To make the icing, you need

1 cup sugar

1/3 cup cocoa

1 tsp. vanilla

1/4 cup milk

1/4 stick of margarine

A dash of salt

Heat the cocoa, sugar, and milk to boil. Let it boil for a minute and then add margarine and vanilla. The mixture will still be a slight liquid. Now, hand beat it slowly until it's smooth. Pour it over the graham cracker top, and then put it in the refrigerator until it hardens. Spray a little cooking spray on the plastic wrapping to prevent it from sticking to the cake.

